GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2136
ANSWERED ON:29.11.2016
Illegal Deforestation and Mining
Puttaraju Shri C.S.

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that illegal deforestation and mining in various parts of the country has forced the tigers to come out of the reserved areas and if so, the details thereof;
(b) whether the Government is contemplating to take any steps to protect the tigers; and
(c) if so, the details thereof and the action taken so far, in this regard?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) FOR ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

(SHRI ANIL MADHAV DAVE)

(a) In so far as tiger reserves are concerned, no such report of illegal deforestation and mining has been received. Tigers do disperse and become transient mostly owing to ethological reasons. Disturbances of any kind viz. large projects, big infrastructure creation as well as linear projects might cause fragmentation of habitat, thereby affecting behavioral pattern of tiger.

(b) & (c) The Government of India through the National Tiger Conservation Authority has taken a number of milestone initiatives to protect and conserve tiger and other wildlife. The details are at Annexure-I.

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ANNEXURE-I

ANNEXURE REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (b) & (c) OF THE LOK SABHA UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2136 ON ILLEGAL DEFORESTATION AND MINING DUE FOR REPLY ON 29.11.2016

Milestone initiatives taken by the Government of India through the National Tiger Conservation Authority to protect and conserve tiger and other wildlife

Legal steps
1. Amendment of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 in 2006 to provide enabling provisions for constituting the National Tiger Conservation Authority under section 38 IV B and the Tiger and Other Endangered Species Crime Control Bureau under section 38 IV C.

2. Enhancement of punishment for offence in relation to the core area of a tiger reserve or where the offence relate to hunting in the tiger reserves or altering the boundaries of tiger reserves, etc.

3. Comprehensive guidelines under section 38O 1 (c) of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 issued for Project Tiger and Tourism in Tiger Reserves on 15th October, 2012.

Administrative steps
4. Constitution of the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) with effect from the 4th September, 2006, for strengthening tiger conservation by, interalia, ensuring normative standards in tiger reserve management, preparation of reserve specific tiger conservation plan, laying down annual audit report before Parliament, constituting State level Steering Committees under the Chairmanship of Chief Ministers and establishment of Tiger Conservation Foundation.

5. Constitution of a multidisciplinary Tiger and Other Endangered Species Crime Control Bureau (Wildlife Crime Control Bureau) with effect from the 6th June, 2007 to effectively control illegal trade in wildlife.

6. Strengthening of antipoaching activities, including special strategy for monsoon patrolling, by providing funding support to tiger reserve States, as proposed by them, for deployment of antipoaching squads involving ex-army personnel or home guards, apart from workforce comprising of local people, in addition to strengthening of communication and wireless facilities.

7. In-principle approval has been accorded by the National Tiger Conservation Authority for creation of new tiger reserves, and the sites are: Ratapani (Madhya Pradesh), Sunabeda (Odisha) and Guru Ghasidas (Chhattisgarh). The State Governments have been

advised to send proposals for declaring the following areas as tiger reserves: (i) Suhelwa Wildlife Sanctuary (Uttar Pradesh), (ii) Mhadei Wildlife Sanctuary (Goa), (iii) Srivilliputhur Grizzled Giant Squirrel / Megamalai Wildlife Sanctuaries / Varushanadu Valley (Tamil Nadu), (iv) Dibang Wildlife Sanctuary (Arunachal Pradesh), (v) Cauveri-MM Hills Wildlife Sanctuary (Karnataka) and (vi) Nandhaur Wildlife Sanctuary (Uttarakhand).

8. Rajaji National Park (Uttarakhand), Orang National Park (Assam) & Kamlang Wildlife Sanctuary (Arunachal Pradesh) have been declared / notified as 48th, 49th & 50th Tiger Reserves. Besides the recently notified tiger reserves include: Kawal (Telangana), Sathyamangalam (Tamil Nadu), Mukandra Hills (Rajasthan), Nawegaon-Nagzira (Maharashtra), Amrabad (erstwhile Nagarjunasagar Srisailam Tiger Reserve portion) (Telangana), Pilibhit (Uttar Pradesh) and Bor (Maharashtra).

9. The revised Project Tiger guidelines have been issued to State Governments for strengthening tiger conservation, which apart from ongoing activities, inter alia, include financial support to States for enhanced village relocation or rehabilitation package for people living in core or critical tiger habitats (from Rs. 1 lakh per family to Rs. 10 lakhs per family), rehabilitation or resettlement of communities involved in traditional hunting, mainstreaming livelihood and wildlife concerns in forests outside tiger reserves and fostering corridor conservation through restorative strategy to arrest habitat fragmentation.

10. A scientific methodology for estimating tiger (including co-predators, prey animals and assessment of habitat status) has been evolved and mainstreamed. The findings of this estimation and assessment are bench marks for future tiger conservation strategy.

11. The 18 tiger States have notified the core/critical tiger habitat (40459.12 sq. km.), and the buffer/peripheral area (31362.45 sq.km.) of all the 50 tiger reserves in the country, under section 38V of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972, as amended in 2006.

12. Regional Offices of the National Tiger Conservation Authority are operational at Nagpur, Bengaluru and Guwahati headed by an Inspector General of Forests.

Financial steps

13. Financial and technical help is provided to the State Governments under various Centrally Sponsored Schemes, such as "Project Tiger" and "Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitats" for enhancing the capacity and infrastructure of the State Governments for providing effective protection to wild animals.

International Cooperation

14. India has a bilateral understanding with Nepal on controlling trans-boundary illegal trade in wildlife and conservation, apart from a protocol on tiger conservation with China.

15. A protocol has been signed in September, 2011 with Bangladesh for conservation of the Royal Bengal Tiger of the Sunderban.

16. A sub-group on tiger and leopard conservation has been constituted for cooperation with the Russian Federation.

17. India is the founder member of the Global Tiger Forum of Tiger Range Countries for addressing international issues related to tiger conservation.

18. During the 14th meeting of the Conference of Parties to CITES, which was held from 3rd to 15th June, 2007 at The Hague, India introduced a resolution along with China, Nepal and the Russian Federation, with direction to Parties with operations breeding tigers on a commercial scale, for restricting such captive populations to a level supportive only to conserving wild tigers. The resolution was adopted as a decision with minor amendments. Further, India made an intervention appealing to China to phase out tiger farming and eliminate stockpiles of Asian big cats body parts and derivatives. The importance of continuing the ban on trade of body parts of tigers was emphasized.

19. Based on India's strong intervention during the 62nd meeting of the Standing Committee of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) at Geneva from 23-27 July, 2012, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora Secretariat has issued a notification No. 2012/054 dated the 3rd September, 2012 to Parties to fully implement Decision 14.69 and report to the Secretariat by 25 September, 2012 (Progress made on restricting captive breeding operations of tigers etc.).

20. The 3rd Asia Ministerial Conference (3 AMC) was organized in New Delhi from 12-14 April 2016. Inspired by the statement of Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi, during this conference that "conservation of tigers is not a choice, it is an imperative", to achieve the concrete results of ensuring the conservation of tigers in the wild and their habitats by 2022, the representatives of the Governments of the Tiger Range Countries resolved to:

? Accelerate implementation of the Global Tiger Recovery Programme (GTRP)/National Tiger Recovery Programme (NTRP) and agreed actions from the above-mentioned declarations, review and update priority and differentiated action plans, and track progress through mutual and systematic reporting and evaluation.
? Align development and tiger conservation in a mutually complementary manner by re-orienting development strategies to mainstream the concerns of tiger conservation, such as by integrating tiger and wildlife safeguards in infrastructure at the landscape level, developing partnerships with business groups, and strong engagement with local stakeholders.
? Leverage funding and technical support from international organisations, bilateral and multilateral financial institutions, foundations, civil society organisations, private sector, and climate funds, in addition to TRC governments.
? Recognise and enhance the importance of tiger habitats by promoting them as providing ecosystem services, as engines of economic growth and helping to address climate change.
? Emphasize recovery of tiger populations in areas with low tiger densities and restoration in areas from which they have been extirpated by using successful programs of tiger reintroduction and rehabilitation of their habitats and prey.

? Strengthen co-operation at the highest levels of government to combat wildlife crime, address the demand for tiger products, and increase formal and informal transboundary coordination.
? Enhance knowledge sharing and capacity development for all stakeholders and increase the use of technology, including smart tools, monitoring protocols, and information systems, to improve management effectiveness.

OTHER MISCELLANEOUS STEPS

21. Creation of Special Tiger Protection Force (STPF): The Special Tiger Protection Force (STPF) has been made operational in the States of Karnataka (Bandipur), Maharashtra (Pench and Tadoba-Andhari) and Odisha (Similipal), out of 13 initially selected tiger reserves, with 60% central assistance under the ongoing Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Project Tiger. In-principle approval has been accorded for creation of the said force in Nawegoan-Nagzira, Melghat (Maharashtra), Kawal and Amrabad (erstwhile Nagarjunasagar Srisailam Tiger Reserve portion) Tiger Reserves (Telangana).

22. In collaboration with TRAFFIC-INDIA, an online tiger crime data base has been launched, and Generic Guidelines for preparation of reserve specific Security Plan has been evolved.

23. Implementing a tripartite Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with tiger States, linked to fund flows for effective implementation of tiger conservation initiatives.

24. Steps taken for modernizing the infrastructure and field protection, besides launching 'Monitoring system for Tigers' Intensive Protection and Ecological Status (M-STrIPES)' for effective field patrolling and monitoring.

25. Steps taken for no-cost involvement of Non-Governmental Experts in the all India tiger estimation.

26. Initiatives taken for improving the field delivery through capacity building of field officials, apart from providing incentives.

27. As a part of active management to rebuild Sariska and Panna Tiger Reserves where tigers have become locally extinct, reintroduction of tigers and tigresses have been done. The successful reintroduction of wild tigers in Sariska is a unique exercise and is the first of its kind in the world. The reintroduced tigresses are breeding. The tiger reintroduction initiative at Panna (MP) has been very successful.

28. Special advisories issued for in-situ build up of prey base and tiger population through active management in tiger reserves having low population status of tiger and its prey.

29. All India Tiger, Co-predators and Prey Estimation, 2014:- The third round of country level tiger status assessment completed in 2014, with the findings indicating an increase with a tiger population estimate of 2226 (lower and upper limits being 1945 and 2491 respectively), as compared to the last country level estimation of 2010, with an estimate of 1706 (lower and upper limits being 1520-1909 tigers), and 2006 estimation, with an estimate of 1411 (lower and upper limits being 1165 and 1657). At present, India has around 70% of tiger population and its source areas amongst the 13 tiger range countries in the world, owing to its long history of conserving the species through Project Tiger (2.18% of country's geographical area spread out in 50 tiger reserves in 18 States).

30. Management Effectiveness Evaluation (MEE): A report on Management Effectiveness Evaluation (MEE) of Tiger Reserves was released on January, 2015, containing the third round of independent assessment based on refined criteria done in 2013-14 for 43 tiger reserves. Out of 43 tiger reserves, 17 were rated as 'very good', 16 as 'good' and 10 as 'fair'.

31. Providing special assistance for mitigation of human-tiger conflicts in problematic areas.

Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)

32. A 'Standard Operating Procedure' for dealing with tiger deaths has been issued, based on advisories of Project Tiger / National Tiger Conservation Authority, with inputs from Wildlife Crime Control Bureau, State officials and experts, fine tuned to meet the present challenges.

33. A 'Standard Operating Procedure' for dealing with straying tigers in human dominated landscape has been issued.

34. A 'Standard Operating Procedure' for disposing tiger/leopard carcass/body parts has been issued.

35. A Standard Operating Procedure has been issued to deal with orphaned / abandoned tiger cubs and old / injured tigers in the wild.

36. A 'Standard Operating Procedure' has been issued to deal with tiger depredation on livestock.

37. A 'Standard Operating Procedure' has been issued for active management towards rehabilitation of tigers from source areas at landscape level.

38. Launching of Phase-IV tiger reserve level, continuous monitoring of tigers using camera traps and building up data on photo captures of individual tigers.

39. Launching the creation of a national repository of camera trap photo IDs of individual tigers.

40. In-principle approval for use of CAMPA funds towards village relocation from core areas.

41. Under active management, permission accorded for translocation of wilded / straying tigers / tigresses from high to low density reserves within States.

42. Field level workshops for capacity building of field officers to deal with straying tigers.

Recent Steps

43. On completion of e-surveillance project in Corbett Tiger Reserve (Uttarakhand), central assistance (100%) has been provided for installing 24X7 e-surveillance at Kaziranga Tiger Reserve (Assam) and fringe of Ratapani Wildlife Sanctuary (Madhya Pradesh).

44. Economic Valuation of six tiger reserves done in collaboration with the Indian Institute of Forest Management. Similar exercise is being done for 10 more tiger reserves.

45. Trial of Unmanned Aerial Vehicle for monitoring done in the Panna Tiger Reserve (Madhya Pradesh), in collaboration with the Wildlife Institute of India and now has plan to extend to other tiger reserves too.

46. Assessment of Status, Density and Change in Forest Cover in and around tiger reserves of the Shivalik Gangetic Plain Landscape done in collaboration with the Forest Survey of India.

47. A Rhino Task Force has suggested measures to strengthen rhino protection in the Kaziranga Tiger Reserve.

48. In-principle approval has been accorded for creation of Rhino Protection Force at Kaziranga Tiger Reserve.

49. Supporting a health insurance scheme for forest guards in Kaziranga Tiger Reserve.

50. Fostering a voluntary group "Friends for Rhino" for eliciting public support for rhino conservation with active local participation around Kaziranga Tiger Reserve.

51. Initiative taken for collaboration with National Remote Sensing Agency (NRSA) towards evolving an alert system in tiger reserves prone to natural disasters.

52. A joint report with Nepal and Bangladesh has been brought out on the assessment of tiger status in the terai arc landscape.

53. Initiative taken for collaboration of National Tiger Conservation Authority and Wildlife Crime Control Bureau towards an online tiger / wildlife crime tracking / reporting system in tiger reserves.

54. Guidelines for security audit of the tiger reserves have been finalised and is getting validated.

55. Tiger rich areas outside tiger reserves are being monitored or bestowing CA|TS certification.

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